

[Mrs. Roland Whittington]

Form A

Circumstances of Interview No. 5

Vermont

C. F. Derven

Poultney

September 6, 1938

Subject ——— Welsh-American Eisteddvods

1. Interview at 10:30 a. m. on September 6, 1938
2. At the home of the informant.
3. Mrs. Rolland Whittington, Bentley Avenue, Poultney, Vt.
4. The informant's name was on an Eisteddvod program for May 17, 1929, which was procured from Mrs. Margaret Edmunds, widow of Thomas Edmunds, of Furnace St., Poultney, Vt. The informant was an adjudicator of certain contests.
5. Unaccompanied. The informant is well-known to interviewer.
6. The informant's home is located at the West end of Bentley Avenue, and on the south side of the street. It is the second house from a street, leading to Broughten Avenue, which used to be called " Hooker's Lane". The house is a long, low building, painted white and trimmed with dark green. It has a long perch an the east side which faces a well-kept lawn

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and a very attractive flower-garden. The informant was standing in the doorway of the kitchen, when I arrived, and chatting with one of her neighbors. She asked me to come in. I entered a small, clean kitchen and sat down on a nearby chair. The odor of good cooking permeated the room. The informant, who was once a next-door neighbor of the interviewer, is a fine house-wife.

Form B

Personal History of Informant

Vermont

C. F. Derven

Poultney

September 12, 1938

Subject ——— Mrs. Rolland Whittington, Bentley Avenue, Poultney, Vermont.

1. Welsh ancestry

2. Born on December 25, 1883 at Bethesda, Carnarvonshire, North Wales. Nee — Williams.

3. Family — Husband, Rolland Whittington; son, Robert; daughter, Winifred; son, Rolland, jr.; daughter, Jane; in order of ages.

4. Informant lived in Wales, at birthplace, until 1888 when her family moved to New Rockland, Quebec, Canada. In 1889 her family again moved to Fair Haven, Vermont, U. S. A. After her marriage, the informant moved to Poultney in 1910, and has resided in that town ever since.

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5. Education —— elementary school.

6. House-wife at present. Worked in shirt factory in Fair Haven as a young woman.

7. She is known as an excellent cook; she raises fine flowers; and has been representative of her lodge at various conventions in other states. She is very much interested in matters pertaining to the Welsh-American people.

8. Member of Welsh church. Active in Eisteddvods. Member of the Rebecca Lodge (A Welsh-American order, women's auxilliary of the True Ivorites.)

9. The informant, of middle age, tall, and of good physical weight and proportion, is a dark-haired, brown-eyed woman with a fine complexion. She is of sympathetic nature, and pleasant in conversation. She is willing to assist others, and has always been known for her community spirit. She speaks, reads, and writes Welsh and English, and spoke French-Canadian as a child. Her voice is well-modulated, quiet, and pleasant to hear; (characteristic of Welsh-American people.)

Form C Text of Interview No. 5 (Unedited)

Vermont

C. F. Derven

Poultney

September 6, 1938

Subject —— Welsh-American Eisteddvods

Q. You were an adjudicator, or judge, in one of the Eisteddvods held in Poultney according to this program that I have.

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A. I was adjudicator for the sewing and darning contest, but there were no entries in the sewing contest. I had to judge only the darning that year.

Q. That was in 1929, according to this program. It was leaned to me by Mrg. Margaret Edmunds.

A. Her husband, Tom, was adjudicator in poetry that year. He was an adjudicator for many Eisteddvods before he died.

Q. Do you happen to have any programs for other years.

A. I do not know whether I have any programs of Poultney Eisteddvods, but I may have programs from other towns. I'll look for them and let you take them if I find any.

Q. Are the programs; that is, the subjects apt to be the same every year? Is this 1929 program typical?

A. We haven't had an Eisteddvod of that size lately. There was one two years ago at Christmas time. It was a small [contestv?] compared to the one that you mention. I'd say that that program was typical of the large contest.

Q. Are there many contestants in the larger contests?

A. The contests are open to Welsh people and anyone else who wants to enter. I can't say how many there would be. [?] Usually there are two, or three mixed choruses, several singers in the challenge sales, and other contests. The challenge sales are open to men and women. They pick their own pieces to sing.

A. There are challenge soles for instruments too.

Q. Are there many contestants in the recitations.

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A. Yes. By daughter won the recitation for children under ten one year. She had to recite "The Swing" by Robert Louis Stevenson. That was in English, of course. There are recitations in Welsh also. You'll find them on that program that you have.

Q. I wonder if you would translate the titles of these Welsh poems that are listed here. (Indicating the program.)

A. Certainly. Arthur bach ai ddillad newydd" means "Little Arthur with his new clothes". "Mi ges fy monet newydd" is "I've got a new bonnet". The first one is for boys to recite, and the second for girls.

Q. Here is a contest for making a leaf of "Bara Brith" and another for making "Bara Ceirch". What are they?

A. "Bara Brith" is a sort of fruit-bread. "Bara Ceirch" is an oatmeal cake that is cooked on top of the stove. It is made of very thin oatmeal.

Q. There is a contest in writing poetry here. What do these words mean?

A. "Pedwar penill wyth llinell, "Y Gweithiwr" (Cymraeg nei Seisnig) "means" Four verses with title, 'The Worker' (in Welsh or English)". The contestants had to write a poem of that type. "Englyn, "Clawdd" is "Essay on "Stone Walls." They had to write the essay on that subject.

Q. The prizes were money?

A. They give money as prizes here, but in Wales at the National

A. Eisteddvod the prize is always a chair. There is a regular ceremony connected with the awarding of the chair. The adjudicator announces the winner. Then he asks the crowd

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three times, "Is there peace?". If the crowd answers, "Yes", the prize is awarded, but if they say, "No", it is not. At some of the Eisteddvods around here, chairs are given too.

Q. I have been told that Eisteddvods are held in many parts of the country.

A. That is true. People travel from many places to compete in them. People from Pennsylvania, where there are many Welshmen, come to local Eisteddvods, and Poultney people go down there. Every year there are choruses that go from this country over to Wales for the National Eisteddvod. In Granville, N. Y., they have more competitors than here. I have often attended the Eisteddvods there.

Form D Extra Comment [md] Interview No. 5.

Vermont

C. F. Derven

Poultney

September 12, 1938

Subject ————— Welsh-American Eisteddvods

On this date, the interviewer procured programs for two of the Eisteddvods which the informant attended. One of these, mentioned in Form C, was a Poultney festival at which the informant officiated. The other program is for an Eisteddvod at Granville, N. Y. in 1903. Both programs were presented to the interviewer, and they will become the property of the Federal Writers' Project if so desired.

Note — In Form C of this interview will be found the promise of the informant to locate some programs. The second visit at 10;30 a. m. on this date produced them.